

Odyssey ORACLE

A learning tool for students of the UW-Madison Odyssey Project

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Meet more alumni on
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Beginning an Odyssey

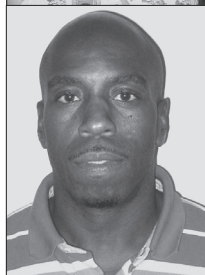
Odyssey '08 students were asked the first night, "How did you feel when you learned you'd been accepted into this class?" Here's what you said:



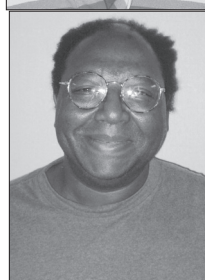
I felt like a door
to my future had
been opened.
(*Loretta Smith*)



Wonderful—
ecstatic—I can
do something
for my children
that my mother
never did for her
children.
(*Angel Red
Cloud Krohn*)



I felt very happy.
It didn't feel real
until I actually
walked through
the door.
(*Dwayne Blue*)



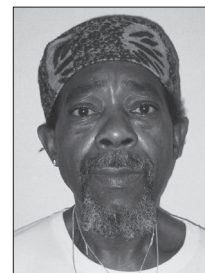
I put on my
Indiana Jones
fedora and got
ready for an
adventure of
a lifetime. My
good feeling
wrapped around
me like a Linus
blanket and I felt
secure about my
future.
(*Gardner*)

Happy and
thankful!
(*Rockameem*)

Elated. Nervous.
Afraid of failure.
Terrified of
success. At the
top of a hill on a
sled. The bottom
of the hill is
inevitable. No
brakes.
(*Kevin Schoen*)

I felt like a
dream come
true. . . . I
felt like my
grandmother
smiled down
from heaven
and blew me
a kiss of pride
and love and
encouragement.
(*Sherri Bester*)

Grateful and
joyous!
(*Ivonne Ramos*)



Beginning an Odyssey: Exciting Adjectives

An **adjective** describes a person, place, or thing (**noun**). On p.1, adjectives some of you used to describe your feelings about acceptance into the Odyssey Project include *wonderful, ecstatic, happy, good, secure, elated, nervous, afraid, terrified, grateful, and joyous*.

Others chose these adjectives:

excited
overwhelmed
surprised
positive
pleased

delighted
awed
shocked
curious
blessed

relieved
privileged
anxious
honored
giddy

The winner of the adjective contest was *excited*. Fourteen of you used this adjective, often followed by many exclamation marks!!!

Meet the Designer of the Oracle, Kegan Carter

Talk show host, painter, author, magazine editor, rap star. Currently, I am none of those things, but ten years ago, I planned on accomplishing all of that and more. Unfortunately, a little thing called LIFE intervened with my dreams, and I found out that sometimes reality is a lot harder to deal with.

I moved to Madison in the fall of 1999. I am the mother of three children. I graduated from the Odyssey Program in 2004. Being in Odyssey cleared the cobwebs from my mind, and helped me realize that knowledge doesn't expire.

Since then, I earned my Associate of Arts degree from Madison Area Technical College. I am now a junior at UW-Madison. I am a part-time designer, full-time student, and overtime mother.

I have accomplished many things so far. The past four years, I designed the yearbooks for the Odyssey program. I was on the Dean's List twice. One of my photographs was a finalist in a Nikon contest. I was inducted in Phi Theta Kappa, an honors society for students in community colleges with grade-point averages of 3.5 or higher.

My determination to succeed has kept me focused on my goals. There have been many times that I thought about quitting because the work was too hard or LIFE threw me a curveball. But those were the times that I looked to my children. If I quit, that would show them that it's okay to give up when things are difficult. And I refuse to set that type of example.

This is the second year I've done the Oracle. If you have a suggestion, comment, or question, please feel free to contact me with the information provided on the cover. Good luck this semester!



Are you a writer?

We asked last week. Here are excerpts from what some of you said.

We didn't have room to get everyone in, but you'll all get a turn!

No, I am not a writer—

"It's just not consistent or expressive enough yet."

Justin Wilson

"I can't put my thoughts into words no matter how hard I try."

Maria Torres

"A writer clearly transforms thoughts, emotions, and actions into comprehensive, identifiable language. ... A writer uses words that do not need defining; his words are clean and concise. I am none of these."

Gardner

"A writer writes. I don't often write."

John Shields

"Being a writer means being good at it and being able to grab your reader's attention; I don't think I'm good at doing that."

Nosihle Lukhele

"I don't believe I write in the style we were taught to write in school. ... [I fear] I may not say things the way I intended to or being judged for how I expressed my thoughts."

Jeff McCarroll

Editor's note:

I beg to differ. The way you answered this question proves that there is a writer in each of you!

Yes, I am a writer—

"I empty my soul on paper when I am alone. ... I am a writer because I love words and playing with them from my mind, to my heart, to my soul, to my spirit, to my body. ... I create my own little world of beauty and safety when I write."

Sherri Bester

"Writing makes me feel complete, because it is my expression of me."

Valerie Williams

"[W]riting means dreaming, fantasizing, and mostly bringing to life what's inside your heart and soul."

R. J. Knight

"I love to convey my thoughts on paper. The idea of being able to put letters together and make it understandable really amazes me. ... While writing, I always feel a sense of accomplishment. I am a writer not only of words but of thoughts, feelings, and ideas."

Josephine Lorya

"Writing my thoughts and feelings brings me joy in a soothing kind of way."

Rene Robinson

"Writing helps me breathe easy and is a peaceful way for me to say what I am feeling."

Ronnie Jones

"[I]f passion captures me, the words just flow from mind to pen."

Ozanne Anderson

"I'm a writer because I want to be. I feel that my words put on paper can be powerful."

Loretta Smith

"I am a writer because I enjoy writing and telling a story from my point of view."

Albert Watson

"I relieve anxiety and anger in words on a page or two. I clear my mind and set my goals all in writing. If I wasn't a writer, I hate to think of all the other things I wouldn't be!"

Tara Wilhelmi

"I am a writer even if I dread the process."

Mandisa Hayes

"[W]ords are the currency of ideas, feelings, and in some very real ways, they are the currency of intimacy."

Kevin Schoen

"I've always been in love with words."

Haroun Omar

"Yes. I'm like Jo March in Alcott's *Little Women*, writing in a vortex. When I write, I forget to eat or sleep, and I write in a fit and frenzy, with hunger and yearning."

Debby Loftsgordon

Don't Quit by Joe Robinson

My advice to the new Odyssey class is don't quit. No matter how hard it gets, don't quit.

When you get off work at 5:30, and you only have thirty minutes to get the kids situated and get to class, don't quit.

When you get stuck in the middle of writing a paper or doing a project, don't quit.

When you find out that your father has cancer and has to have surgery and treatment, don't quit.

When you have circumstances that occur that make you miss a class and you get behind on your work, don't quit.

When you feel as if you're not getting anything out of a particular subject, don't quit. When people tell you you are wasting your time, don't quit. When your car breaks down, and it's twenty below outside, and the only way to get here is on the city bus, don't quit. When your spouse is complaining that your five children are driving her crazy every Wednesday night, don't quit. When one of your classmates makes you

feel stupid for voicing your opinion, don't quit. When your girlfriend accuses you of cheating on her because you had to turn your cell phone off during class, don't quit.

And if you get to the point where you just can't find any more motivation to force yourself to keep coming to this class, my advice is to call Emily, and I guarantee you that she won't let you quit! There were many times that I wanted to just give up, but Emily would not let me. She believed in us more than some of

us believed in ourselves.

Finally, I would like to say that the first couple of weeks I was in class trying to figure out, what is the catch? Why are these people offering us this course for free? There must be a catch. I found out what the catch was. Each one of the teachers was trying to trick us into believing that our lives would somehow be better if we completed this Odyssey class and then go on to graduate from college.

I guess I must be naive, because I fell for it hook, line, and sinker.

Joe Robinson is a graduate of the 2003-2004 Odyssey class.

